



# Wisconsin Boating News

A Newsletter for Volunteer Boating Safety Instructors

Number 45

October 2001

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## Word From Your Administrator

### John Lacenski

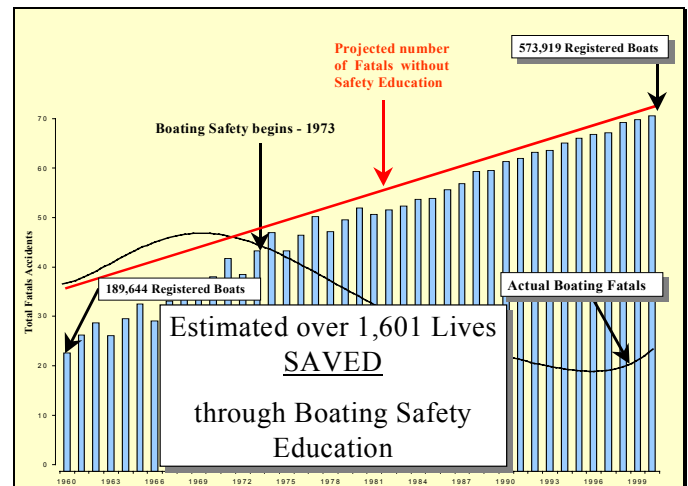
As the 2001 boating season winds down it provides a good opportunity to reflect on our successes of the past season and the areas that we need to improve. As of this writing 144 boat accidents have been reported to us. Nineteen people lost their lives as a result of those accidents. While that is an improvement over the 25 fatalities we experienced during the 2000 season it is still 19 unnecessary deaths and I don't have to tell you that once again the vast majority drown because they weren't wearing their PFD's. This summer eight of those fatalities occurred on Lake Michigan which underscores the need to continually remind our students of the extra precautions they must take every time they venture out on this huge, always cold body of water.

Another disturbing trend we have identified is the number of these accidents that involve non-motorized boats. Ten of these years' fatalities or 53% of the total were boating in a non-motorized craft. We have seen a steady increase in this figure in recent years, from 13% of the fatal accidents in 1998, to 27% in 1999, to 36% in 2000. With the increasing popularity of canoeing and kayaking this trend may continue to increase unless we find a way to convince these participants that they are boaters also and need to take a boating safety course before they go out. One of this years tragic accidents involved a couple that had just purchased new kayaks and when they came upon a lowhead dam decided that it looked like it would be fun to kayak over, completely unaware of the dangers involved. We will be increasing our efforts to reach this segment of the boating community.

This year also saw some new and innovative ideas and techniques for spreading the safe boating message. One of our volunteer instructors, Bob Story of Middleton, won the coveted National Boating Education Advancement Award for the boating safety web site that he developed and maintains. Congratulations to Bob for this well deserved honor.. You might want to check out his site at [www.CommanderBob.com](http://www.CommanderBob.com).

With this issue we are introducing a new column to the newsletter to highlight the other ideas that are being tried around the state. The column is called **"What's Happening Around the State"** and provides an opportunity for each of the RSW's to explain what is happening in their areas in the field of boating safety. Feel free to steal ideas that you see highlighted there and please let your RSW know what new ideas your group is trying. We need to share our successes so we can save even more lives.

In closing I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks for all your efforts in teaching boating safety courses this year. We have already offered more classes and certified more students then we did the entire year in 2000, and we still have a number of classes scheduled for this fall. Thank you again for all the time you volunteer for this important program. Working together we can and do make a difference. Here is a graph we produced for our State Fair display that documents the effect you are having on making our waters safer.



**West Central Region:** Tom Bokelman

Well, another boating Season is mostly behind us for 2001. It was a very busy year, resulting in much activity through the region.

Two Boating Safety Instructor workshops were held this Spring in WCR, one in the LaCrosse area and one in Eau Claire area. I anticipate holding additional workshops in the Spring of 2002, and details will be sent out before these events.

A well known Sheriffs Department Patrol Officer, Paul Differt of Juneau County, recently won the Regional "Award of Merit" from the National Water Safety Congress, which was organized in 1951. This award is presented annually to those individuals, organizations, firms or agencies who make significant contributions or outstanding efforts to enhance or promote water safety at the local, community or state level.

Officer Differt exemplifies these values, and is a wonderful choice for receiving this award. Juneau County borders the heavily used recreational areas of the Petenwell Flowage and Castle Rock Flowage along the Wisconsin River, as well as the very popular Upper Dells tourist area attraction. Paul Differt has been instrumental in successfully developing a strong boating law enforcement program, improving boating safety in those high use areas, and also teaching boating safety classes to our youth.

**Northern Region:** Terry Brown

Summer seems to have quickly come and gone and cool evenings and foggy mornings are upon us.

Thanks to your effort we have had a safer boating season and 585 students were certified as safe boaters this summer in 30 boating safety classes in the Northern Region.

Fall boating is still at hand and we must remember that wearing life preservers is still of great importance. As lakes begin to cool and fall hunting and boating begin, walleyes and muskys become active. We must once again think in terms of safety.

This will be my last boating article. I am going to retire at the end of this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the boating instructors that I have been lucky enough to meet over my tenure with the department. I am always amazed at the number of unselfish people that we as Wardens come in contact with. Everyday people, who unselfishly volunteer their time, juggle ever increasing busy schedules to help young people across the State of Wisconsin.

As I look back at all the instructors that have become acquaintances and good friends from our experiences in the safety programs together, I would like to give a heart-felt

thank you. Thank you for helping me as a Conservation Warden. Thank you for helping me as a Recreational Safety Warden. Thank you for all those students that your sacrifices have made better and safer boaters. Thank you for allowing our paths to cross. I know that I am a better person because of it.

**Southeast Region- South:** John Bronikowski

This past Boating season we had 48 classes offered in Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, and Walworth Counties that graduated about 1,300 students. I want to thank all of you that participated in the teaching of Boating Safety in any way. We had some classes offered as early as March and as late in the season as July. For whatever reason, I continue to get calls from people looking for classes in July and August. If you have the time or if you procrastinated and then thought it was too late to have a class, know that the need is out there for late season classes.

This summer I offered the Departments Home-Study class in the Milwaukee Area and those that participated were very happy with the program. I put out a notice for the test date, which coincided with the Milwaukee Safe Boating Council's 'Safe Boating Event' at McKinley Marina. Students, who were limited to age 16 and older, would register for the class and receive the Boating Safety student manual to study at their convenience. On the test date, students arrived, showed identification, and took a special test that I graded on the spot. Although the Home Study test is more difficult than the standard class test, participants had no problem passing it, as the average grade was over 90%. If you would like more information on the Home-Study course, please give me a call.

The Junior Instructor Programs for Boating Safety is getting off to a slow start in my area and I would like to see that change. Junior instructors are former students who you glean from your class to help out at future classes. The goal is to keep these young people involved in the program until they are 18 years old, at which point they can become a fully certified instructor. Junior Instructors are allowed to help teach in the classroom as long as a certified instructor is supervising them at all times. If you would like more information on the Junior Instructor program, please give me a call.

**Southeast Region - North:** John Plenke

"National Night Out" brings tremendous response. Communities around the state participated in this night of safety displays and demonstrations put on by public safety organizations from their area. The DNR had an active role in the August 7<sup>th</sup> activity held at Frame Park in the City of Waukesha. Safe hunting, snowmobiling, ATV riding, and **boating** displays were set up for the public to view and ask questions. The boating display featured demonstrations on the proper use of PFD's, including the inflatable PFD. The public in attendance (approx. 1,000 over a 3 hr. span) who watched the PFD demos were impressed by ease of use

(wearability) of the inflatable. I would encourage you to get involved in this activity if one is held in your community. It is immeasurable the amount of good it does to promote safety within your own communities at a venue such as this. Please utilize the inflatable PFD in your classes this next season. It is one more step in the business of saving lives that we all are in.

*Identifying potential new instructors* - Recruitment and retention of instructors is important for any volunteer program to remain afloat. In the boating safety ranks we are no different than any other state or federal organization who depend upon volunteers to get their message out to the public. At present we have a solid nucleus of dedicated volunteers who, year in and year out, do a tremendous job within their community of providing this valuable service. What I have noticed, however, that I am certifying very few "new" instructors into the program. Once you retire, or step down as "the" boating instructor in your community, who is going to fill your shoes? To avoid that I encourage all instructors to actively keep an "eye out" for those individuals who have the potential and time to become quality boating safety instructors. Just how do you do that? One factor that I am always impressed with, is the number of adults taking the course along with their daughters or sons. That is a resource that may be waiting to be tapped. All you have to do is ask. Is every adult that takes your course qualified? Absolutely not. You can identify those who may be potential candidates by how willing they help out in class, how well they interact with the students, their enthusiasm toward the course, and their degree of boating knowledge. Once that comes to the surface, pop the question to them before or after class begins. It definitely won't hurt and you may be surprised with the answer. Call me if you have questions on how to approach these people and I will be glad to help.

#### **Northeast - North Region:** Jeff Dauterman

What's happening with Boating up here in North Central Wisconsin? The summer seemed to fly by, with a lot of things happening in the boating program. Probably the most significant has been the proliferation of local boating ordinances on area lakes. The lakes continue to increase in user participation and there is a growing interest in keeping boating safe and the protection of the lakes. Of particular interest are the local ordinances designed to protect the fragile water ecosystems of our lakes. Shallow bays and near shore areas are the favored areas targeted for extra protection. Also areas of Eurasian Water Milfoil treatment needed the extra protection. Generally this protection has been to make the areas into slow no wake zones. However, there has been a couple which restricted use to electric motors only. Something we need to start emphasizing in our boat safety classes is the presence of local boating ordinances on lakes. Boaters need to watch out for them!

Other items of importance occurred in the Boat Safety Program itself. I conducted a Boat Safety Instructor

certification workshop in Spread Eagle of Florence County. Five new instructors were certified to provide boating safety classes in the Spread Eagle area and the Lac du Flambeau area. Recruitment of new Boating Safety Instructors has been tough these last few years. We certainly could use more help. Lake Association members are a group of potential instructors that remain woefully untapped. Your encouragement to these people to become Boating Safety Instructors would be greatly appreciated.

Instructor group in Keshena on Legend Lake held a PWC Safety course. This course followed the guidelines of a course developed and used by Conservation Wardens in the Green Bay area. Duane Voigt and his fellow instructors thought the course would be beneficial to the people in the Legend Lake area. Duane reported the course went extremely well with a lot of enthusiasm from the students and the instructors. Many of our Boat Safety Instructors live with and/or hear the many complaints about PWC operation. We had a first, for this area, in PWC instruction. The Boat Safety Class is an excellent way to get safety training and information out to the PWC operators.

#### **Northeast - South Region:** Pat Lisi

Lots of good things happened in the boating world over this past summer in the Northeast Region of the State.

We were very successful in hosting a boat safety instructor certification workshop by which several more instructors were brought into our corps of capable and energetic teachers. There is always room to grow, however, so if you have someone you know would be valuable to the boat safety instructor ranks please let us know.

The Northeast Region, and more specifically the southern NER, which is where I work, is a tremendously active area of the state for boating. Besides Lake Winnebago and its chain of lakes we also have the Bay of Green Bay, and Lake Michigan, in our district. As you can imagine, we run the entire gamut of vessels afloat where conflict can arise. There were 46 non-fatal accidents reported to this office since January, 2001 which is actually a low number when you consider the amount of boating that goes on here.

Unfortunately, there have been 7 fatal boating accidents this year in the Region. That is a number that we all realize is way too high. We are always doing our best to educate boaters to be safe on the water, and hopefully these numbers will come down next season.

We offered a home study boating course earlier this summer and, while attendance was low, we did attract a dozen folks who took the material, studied it, and then showed up one evening for the proctored exam. We will certainly give it another shot in 2002. I am confident there are people out there who will take us up on this offer, once the word starts spreading that it is a very legitimate way to become certified in basic boating safety. A minimum age of 16 is required for

the home study boating course. If you are interested in learning more about it, please contact your local RSW or me.

In January, 2001 I was lucky enough to be assigned to attend the US Coast Guard's Law Enforcement Officer's two-week academy in Yorktown, Virginia. This was a great couple of weeks for me. I learned a lot about boating accident investigation as well as getting updated on federal boating law, something most of us do not know much about. When you are stationed around one of the Great Lakes however, this knowledge is quite valuable.

Yorktown is a fantastic place to visit, by the way, if you and your family are looking for an adventure next year! Plan to spend a lot of time learning about the birth of our country and touring the different battlefields and museums.

We held workshops for our boating instructors in March, and you will get notice of the workshops coming up in March 2002. We had about 100 instructors from the South NER at three workshops. I'd like to see more of you folks there if you can possibly fit a workshop into your schedules. These are generally very informative get-togethers, and it will give me a chance to meet all my boating instructors.

**Central Office:** Leanne LeBoeuf

As I look back at the summer, I would like to share some very exciting events that we took part in.

## LIFE JACKETS.... THEY FLOAT - YOU DON'T

Because I believe we have to reach our kids to make a lasting impression and to pass the word on to their parents, we were very active in trying to attend as many events as possible.

First, we had an iron-on decal made up and were very successful in getting them on children's T-shirts. For many of you this may be the first time you've heard about the decal, so above right is a picture of what they look like. The children color them any way they choose to and we pressed them onto a T-shirt. If you look on the picture, you can see that not only could we reach the kids with something that interested them, we could also educate them at the same time.



*Tom Bokelman - State Fair 2001*

We were at the Washington County Fair, Boating Safety Day in Milwaukee, and the State Fair this past summer. The joy in the kids eyes as we showed them the finished product was well worth the effort. All together we had about 3,000 kids color their own decals and are walking around Wisconsin displaying the "Life Jackets - They Float, You Don't" theme.

If you have an upcoming event where you would like to use the decals, please talk to your Recreational Safety Specialist for details.

To celebrate "Safe Boating Week" in Wisconsin this year, we held a "home-study" boating safety course with a proctored exam at three different sites over the past few months. The first one was at the WI Assoc. of Lakes Conference, second at the DNR Central Office Bldg. (for any State employees that work in the three downtown offices), and the last was at the Maple Bluff Fire Dept. This helped certify some adults that thought they knew boating and realized they needed to study.

**Leanne LeBoeuf** - Central Office. In your last newsletter, I tried something different and didn't get any responses to it. Remember the receipt? I was hoping you would share some of your favorite recipes, however I didn't receive any response. So let's try something different. How about this little quiz.

**Instructor**



**Quiz**

If you have questions that you are not sure about it's possible that your fellow instructors may have the same question. So if you like this section, please send me your questions and I'll work off those. Send or mail questions to me at: DNR, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI, 53707-7921 or email me at: [leboel@dnr.wi.state.us](mailto:leboel@dnr.wi.state.us)

## Think You're Up To Speed As An Instructor?

### Take the "Instructor Challenge"

Test your memory with the following quiz to see if you still have it.

1. *To start a safety class, a Registration Card should be submitted \_\_\_\_\_.*

- a. 1 week prior to a class starting
- b. 3 weeks prior to a class starting
- c. 4 weeks prior to a class starting
- d. 6 weeks prior to a class starting

2. *Unless prior approval is obtained from the RSW, a class can not be held unless there are at least \_\_\_\_\_ students enrolled.*

- a. There is no minimum class size.
- b. 3
- c. 5
- d. 10

3. *Recently, the Safety Section introduced a new teaching aid for volunteer instructors to use. The new aid is \_\_\_\_\_.*

- a. "The Boaters Handbook"
- b. Decibel meters
- c. OWI goggles
- d. Clip boards

4. *You may discuss personal incidents (citations/stops) you have had with law enforcement officers during your class as long as you do it in a joking manner.*

- a. True
- b. False

5. *Immediately after your last class you need to \_\_\_\_\_.*

- a. Send the original copy of the student safety course registration card to Madison.
- b. Complete the back of each student Safety Course Registration Card with the final grade, including reasons for a failure.
- c. Send the Course Roster and Remittance forms along with a check or money order covering the student fees to Madison.
- d. All of the above.

Answers next page 6



Personally I am always ready to learn, I do not always like being taught.  
Winston Churchill

## "Commander Bob's Boating Safety Notebook" WINS NATIONAL BOATING AWARD

This past April in Nashville, TN, at the 2001 International Boating and Water Safety Summit, Robert Story of Middleton won the National Safe Boating Councils "Boating Education Advance" for his web site.

Although it's difficult to imagine, the term "Internet" was not a household word in 1996 when the "Commander Bob's" site was born. It was extremely difficult to find any information then about boating, let alone information specific to boating safety. So the stage was set for someone to fill that gap.

Considerable boating safety information is disseminated to boaters and potential boaters through the web site, with NO cost to taxpayers or viewers. The mission and objective of the site has always been and is today: to provide education and information instead of income.

There seems to be something for everyone at Commander Bob's, including a very popular weekly Trivia "contest", which will challenge the novice or "Ship's Master". For educators, newsletter editors, and the curious boater, the value of the Trivia Archives is a priceless resource, with over five years worth of weekly Trivia questions and answers.

Please check out Mr. Story's web site and feel free to ask any questions as Bob also will research your question and get you an answer. [www.CommanderBob.com](http://www.CommanderBob.com)

## Wisconsin Boating Safety Advisory Council "We Need You"

We are proud to announce that the Department has begun the process of forming the "Wisconsin Boating Safety Advisory Council" to advise the Department on strategies to make boating safer in our state. The council will be composed of about a dozen volunteers who represent a broad cross section of Wisconsin's boating community. We would like to have one of our volunteer instructors on this council to share your expertise and ideas with the group. If you have the time to volunteer a couple of additional days a year to make boating safer, please consider sending in the Council application at the back of this newsletter. This group will be in a position to make a real difference for boating safety in our state. You can send the application to your local RSW. Although the members will be volunteering their time to serve on this important council, the Department will be able to fund their travel expenses to attend the council meetings. If you have any questions feel free to give your local RSW or Leanne a call.

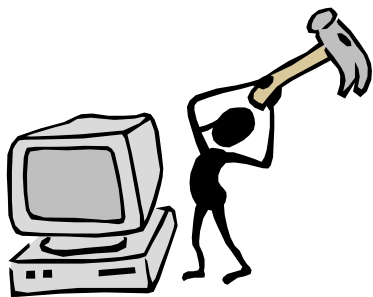


## What's New on the Internet?

**Leanne LeBoeuf** - Madison. When was the last time you checked out our boating safety web site? We have several areas that might interest you. First, this newsletter is on our site, so if you would like a color copy and have a color printer, please print it out. Also, do you know when you send in your start card, it not only ensures that your class is insured, but also that it is listed on the web. That could be why your classes fill up so soon. We have had a few problems with incorrect information being placed out there, so to cut down on the human error, please print your information clearly to eliminate the misinterpretation. When you click on a County, all the safety classes that are scheduled pop up; if there isn't any in that County, you can check the surrounding counties by just clicking on them. At the present time we are receiving 4,321 hits per month, and it's been climbing steadily.

The 2000 Boating Program Annual Report is also on our site. If you want any figures, or statistics on boating accidents, here is the place to look. Hopefully by the end of January the 2001 report will be out there for you to view and print for your class information.

We also have the wardens' monthly reports out on the web for everyone to view. This is really an excellent site, as it's updated each month, and you can go back and read previous reports. If you think of something you would like to see on the web site, please e-mail me and I'll see if it can be done. My e-mail is: [leboel@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:leboel@dnr.state.wi.us) Even though you may not have any boating classes upcoming this winter, be sure to surf our web at: [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us)



## BOAT SMART FROM THE START WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET

### Answers to the Instructor Challenge

1=d, 2=c, 3=c, 4=b, 5=d.

Scoring:

5 points - You're an expert!!! You should go out and start another safety class. Have you thought about recruiting another instructor?

4 points - Not too shabby.

3 points - Time to read the policies located in your Instructor Manual.

2 points - You would do well by mentoring with someone for a class or two.

1 point - Perhaps it's been a while since you reviewed the manual. Take a good long review with a hot cup of coffee this winter and retest yourself.

0 points - Need we say anything?

Need help? Check your "Recreational Safety Instructor Manual."

Remember, send in the questions you think your fellow instructors may need to freshen up on. This is your newsletter and we would like to see it help you.

# Boating Instructor Application for the Boating Safety Advisory Council

Please return by 11/2/01

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information to aid us in the selection process: Use Back if Necessary

With which (if any) group is this instructor affiliated?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What type of boating is this instructor involved in?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has the instructor ever served on a committee? If yes, elaborate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What boating education courses is this instructor familiar with?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why does this instructor want to serve on this committee?

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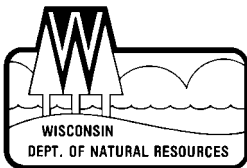
Please enclose additional sheets if necessary.

After completing send to your Recreational Safety Warden

Wisconsin Boating News is issued twice a year to boating instructors and conservation wardens. It is not available to the general public by subscription. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

## Boat Smart from the Start - Wear your Life Jacket

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Department of Natural Resources  
Bureau of Law Enforcement  
PO Box 7921  
Madison WI 53707-7921

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